

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (Currently amended): A tunnel port apparatus comprising:

a guideneedle assembly having a guarded ~~needle tip~~ hollow core guideneedle, the hollow core guideneedle including a solid core obturator needle;

a blunt-tip port cannula overlying said guideneedle assembly, said port cannula having a valve apparatus with a serial gas-check assembly, said serial gas-check assembly comprises at least one apertured membrane and a non-return valve;

a tapered blunt obturator rod within said port cannula and overlying said guideneedle assembly; and

a support frame including an elongated member portion having proximal and distal ends and from which support members extend therefrom supporting said guideneedle assembly and port cannula

wherein the guideneedle assembly extends outward at an original position relative to the port cannula and obturator rod to create a tunnel for insertion of the port cannula, the port cannula and obturator rod extending to a second position over the guideneedle assembly during insertion of the port cannula.

Claim 2 (Original): The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said guideneedle assembly is joined to said support frame at said proximal end of said support frame.

Claim 3 (Canceled)

Claim 4 (Original): The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said support frame includes a track along at least a portion of said elongated member portion

Claim 5 (Original): The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said obturator rod has a cap at its proximal end.

Claim 6 (Original): The apparatus of claim 5 wherein said cap further comprises at least one extension member.

Claim 7 (Original): The apparatus of claim 6 wherein said at least one extension member is a guide that follows a track in said support frame.

Claim 8 (Original): The apparatus of claim 6 wherein said at least of extension member is a push tab.

Claim 9 (Original): The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said support frame includes at least one disconnect site along said elongated member portion.

Claim 10 (canceled)

Claim 11 (canceled)

Claim 12 (Original): The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a disconnect site.

Claim 13 (Original): The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a locking mechanism along said elongated member portion of said support frame.

Claim 14 (Withdrawn): A method for obtaining access to an internal space, comprising:

- preparing a subject for surgery;
- providing a tunnel port apparatus comprising a support frame having separable proximal and distal portions and a disconnect site, said tunnel port apparatus having a valve apparatus with a serial gas-check assembly;
- inserting a guideneedle through an incision;
- advancing a port cannula and obturator rod over the guideneedle into said internal space;
- disconnecting said proximal and distal portions of said frame;
- withdrawing said hollow core guideneedle and obturator rod; and
- leaving said port cannula with said distal portion of said frame to provide access to said internal space.

Claim 15 (Withdrawn) The method of claim 14 wherein said insertion is at a skin incision.

Claim 16 (Withdrawn) The method of claim 14 further comprising the step of providing a laparoscopic port.

Claim 17 (Withdrawn) The method of claim 14 wherein said internal space is a peritoneal space.

Claim 18 (Withdrawn) The method of claim 17 wherein said insertion of said guideneedle is inserted through at least one muscular layer.

Claim 19 (Withdrawn) The method of claim 18 wherein said muscular layer is an anterior rectus muscle.

Claim 20 (Withdrawn) The method of claim 18 further comprising the step of angling said guideneedle towards a pelvis.

Claim 21 (Withdrawn) The method of claim 14 further comprising the step of introducing a catheter to said internal space via said port cannula.

Claim 22 (Withdrawn) The method of claim 14 further comprising the step of introducing a shunt.

Claim 23 (Withdrawn) The method of claim 20 wherein said angling results in forming a tunnel through said sheath.

Claim 24 (Withdrawn) The method of claim 14 wherein said internal space is a gastrointestinal space.

Claim 25 (Withdrawn) The method of claim 14 wherein said internal space is at least one of a hollow viscus, abscess and lymphocele.

Claim 26 (Withdrawn) The method of claim 14 wherein said serial gas check assembly comprises at least one apertured member and at least one non-return valve.

Claim 27 (Currently amended) A tunnel port apparatus comprising:

a support frame including an elongated member portion having a proximal support member and an apertured distal support member extending from said elongated member portion, said elongated member portion including a track;

a guideneedle assembly having a guarded ~~needle-hollow core guideneedle, the hollow core guideneedle including a solid core obturator needle~~ attached to said proximal support member; and

a blunt-tip port cannula over said guideneedle assembly and supported by said apertured distal support member, said port cannula having a valve apparatus with a serial gas-check assembly, said serial gas-check assembly comprises at least one apertured membrane and a non-return valve;

wherein the guideneedle assembly extends outward at an original position relative to the port cannula and obturator rod to create a tunnel for insertion of the port cannula, the port cannula and obturator rod extending to a position overlying the guideneedle assembly during insertion of the port cannula.